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BUREAU OF ADULT EDUCATION AND NUTRITION PROGRAMS
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OPERATIONAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Sponsors of the Child Nutrition Programs

FROM: Maureen Staggenborg, Bureau Chief

DATE: October 8, 2003

SUBJECT: **Operational Memorandum # 04-04**

- I. Military Housing Allowance Continuation**
- II. Use of Pasteurized Juice in the Child Nutrition Programs**
- III. Even Start Categorical Eligibility for Pre-Kindergarteners**
- IV. Changes to the Food Buying Guide**

I. Military Housing Allowance Continuation –Operational Memorandum # 16-02 (dated August 9, 2002), indicated that the housing allowance for military personnel living in privatized housing was not to be counted as income when determining eligibility for free and reduced price meal benefits. This exclusion was in effect through September 30, 2003, but has now been extended until October 31, 2003. Congress may extend the dates of this exclusion, but that cannot be predicted at this time. We will notify sponsors immediately if the exclusion is extended.

II. Use of Pasteurized Juice in the Child Nutrition Programs - USDA's Food and Nutrition Service strongly recommends that only pasteurized juice be used as part of a reimbursable meal/snack in the Child Nutrition Programs. This policy is consistent with the current *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs; revised November 2001, Section 2, page 2-43*, that recommends using only pasteurized juice. The American Academy of Pediatrics also supports the recommendation to use only pasteurized juice. Pasteurized juice is generally identified as such on the product label.

The concern about unpasteurized or untreated juice, such as apple juice, cider, and orange juice, is based on outbreaks of foodborne illnesses caused by pathogenic microorganisms present in these unpasteurized or untreated products. Children, pregnant women, the elderly, and persons with weakened immune systems are at particular risk for serious illnesses, and even death, caused by these harmful microorganisms. The unpasteurized or untreated juice is often referred to as "natural juice."

III. Even Start Pre-Kindergarteners Categorical Eligibility – Recent inquiries have surfaced regarding free meal benefits for children in Even Start Literacy Programs. According to P. L. 105-336, children are categorically eligible for free meals if they meet the following criteria:

- 1) the sponsor must be participating in the NSLP, SBP, SMP, SFSP, or CACFP;
- 2) the child must be enrolled as a participant in the federally-funded Even Start Family Literacy Program;
- 3) the child must be in pre-kindergarten

Please note that once a child enters kindergarten, the child's household income must be collected in order to determine eligibility for meal benefits. Also, categorical eligibility does not apply to other family members.

IV. Changes to the *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs*

USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG) contains yield information for common types and customary sizes of meat/meat alternates, vegetables and fruits, and grains/breads. It includes commercially available foods and USDA-donated commodities. The Food Buying Guide can be used to determine (1) how much food to purchase to meet minimum portion sizes and (2) a recipe's contribution to the CACFP meal pattern.

The most recent edition of the FBG (2001) has been found to contain several errors. Attached is a list of pen and ink changes that should be made to the FBG to correct these unintentional mistakes. Please note that the changes are highlighted for easy identification.

Two particular concerns have been raised repeatedly that deserve additional explanation. Both are in the "Grains/Bread" section and involve the same issue. Cooked rice and pasta yields vary depending on how they are cooked. The pasta entries each have a specific time that they were boiled. This was done to better define what level of doneness the yields represented. The rice yields were not given a cook time, but USDA did use the lower range of the yields they found for each type of rice so that the user will always have enough prepared.

Many things can change the yield of pasta and rice. If a food service operation consistently gets a different yield with pasta or rice (or any other product in the FBG), we suggest that a local yield be determined for that product and cooking method. There is a general outline of how this should be done in the "Introduction" of the FBG on pages 3 and 4.

While supplies are available, sponsors may obtain a copy of the FBG by contacting the Bureau of Adult Education and Nutrition Programs at (860) 807-2070. The FBG may also be downloaded from USDA's website at <http://schoolmeals.nal.usda.gov/FBG/buyingguide.html>.